

Marine Reserves Working Group Public Forum #1

Oxnard Community Center

January 20, 2000

7:30 – 10:00 pm

Meeting Agenda

7:00 - 7:15 p.m.	Introduction - Working Group Co-chairs Patty Wolf & Ed Cassano
7:15 - 8:00 p.m.	Overview of the Process & Progress to Date, General Process questions - John Jostes
8:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Public Input - Breakout into small roundtable discussions-facilitated by Working Group Members, Sanctuary and DFG staff.
9:00 - 9:30 p.m.	Summary from Roundtable Discussions and Next Steps.

Meeting Overview

The Public Forum was opened by Ed Cassano, Manager of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and Patty Wolf, Statewide Offshore Ecosystem Coordinator for the California Department of Fish and Game. Mr. Cassano and Ms. Wolf each provided an overview of the purpose and intent of the Public Forum and welcomed the participants.

John Jostes, process facilitator, then provided an overview of the process that had been developed

and employed to date with regard to the Marine Reserve Working Group, Science Panel and Socioeconomic Team for the consideration of marine reserves. After this introduction, he opened the forum up to questions from the audience.

Many members of the audience asked questions and offered comments. Participants indicated that they had not previously been aware of the process, were not clear about the differences

between consensus and majority rules styles of decision-making, did not understand why the process had been initiated, or what the final outcome would be.

Unedited initial questions and comments:

- § Target Date: When you have the right information.
- § Don't move too fast.
- § What are the problems that resulted in the need for marine reserves?
- § What is the definition of a marine reserve?
- § What is the question you're asking us?
- § What other things are being considered?
- § What about El Niño effects?
- § How many MRWG members are native Californians?
- § Who is the restoration committee (CIMRRC)?
- § Why didn't the Federal government talk to the fishing community before closing rockfish?
- § What information did CIMRC use?
- § CINMS jurisdiction – Surface, water column or bottom too?
- § If you want to conserve the resource, are you interested in species that reside versus migratory/pelagic resources?
- § Is East Anacapa a "reserve" and, if so, is the "reserve" forever?
- § If reserves are designated, I fear that it will be forever.
- § If NOAA is paying the facilitator, than the facilitator is beholden to NOAA.
- § "Sustainable" and "no-take" collide--it is an oxymoron.
- § Is there a mandate for Reserves--20%?

Following the initial comments from the audience and preliminary responses from the Co-chairs of the Marine Reserve Working Group, the facilitator explained the progress to date in determining the six broad categories of goals and objectives that are guiding the deliberations of the Working Group. These are:

- Ecosystem Biodiversity
- Sustainable Fisheries
- Reserve Administration
- Education/Research
- Socio-Economics

- Natural/Cultural Heritage Recreation

Of these, the Working Group has reached preliminary consensus on complete goal statements for two categories:

Ecosystem Biodiversity Goal:

- *To protect representative marine habitats, ecological processes and populations of concern.*

Sustainable Fisheries Goal:

- *To assist in the recovery of depleted populations.*
- *To provide insurance against fisheries management uncertainties*
- *To help sustain fisheries outside the reserves*
- *To achieve long-term productivity with minimal short-term negative impacts to all users.*

In the next phase of the forum, participants moved from the center seating area to small tables around the edges of the hall. Each table of approximately 8-12 persons was accompanied by 1-2 “facilitators” – members of the Working Group, and/or DFG and Sanctuary staff. Public participants were given a chance to ask additional questions, describe their most significant concerns, and make suggestions toward improving both the process and the content of the final recommendation on reserves. Focus questions asked at each table, (given sufficient time) were:

1. Why are you interested? Why did you come?
2. How are we doing on the first two goals?
3. Do you have questions about the process?
4. How do we communicate better?
5. What should we do differently?

All comments and questions received from participants were written on large sheets of paper by the facilitators. After approximately an hour of comment, discussion ended and the sheets of comments compiled from each table were read to the group at large. These same comments have now been posted verbatim on the CINMS web site and are listed below.

All questions and comments from the forum participants were copied into the list below, regardless of whether similar comments had been made by other participants. Comments were then grouped into 7 general topic areas:

1. Economic Impacts
2. The Role and Adequacy of Science in the Marine Reserves Consideration Process
3. Structure and Fairness of the process
4. Communication
5. Design Issues related to Reserves
6. Issue Definition and Solution
7. Miscellaneous

Each of these categories was further separated by form, either “question/concern” or “suggestion.”

Approximately 250 persons attended the forum, representing a variety of stakeholder groups. A mailing list sign up sheet was present at the door, as were several handouts of informational materials regarding the process to consider marine reserves, Working Group membership, future meeting schedules, and methods to stay informed about the process or submit comments.

Summary of Public Input

Category 1 – Economic Impacts

Questions and concerns:

- Fishers are most at risk on this issue.
- Will the livelihood of user groups be affected?
- How do you capture the socio-economic effects?
- Fishermen feel that they are the ones that are getting the most taken from through management.
- Examples – being forced to cease fishing on a daily basis because restrictions keep you out of areas at opportune times.
 - Do you have to leave when not done with a days work because you can’t take cover in a closed anchorage?
- Fishermen take law enforcement seriously
 - Will lose license – not worth risk
- No such thing as a no-take zone – livelihood of fishermen is taken.
- Commercial fishermen are scared of losing resources as they have had in the past.
- Marine reserves are a threat to fishers livelihoods.
- How the impacts be mitigated? Subsidies?
- If the species that I fish for is not endangered, why is the area being closed?
- When you are potentially putting a lot of people out of work, justify your decision.

Suggestions:

- Please consider users when picking reserves.
- Keep economic impact to a minimum.

Category 2- The Role and Adequacy of Science in the Marine Reserves Consideration Process

Questions and concerns:

- Who are the experts? Are scientists impartial?
- Where is the data and who are the scientists on the panel?
- How do you account for changes in pinniped populations?
- How do you account for loss of habitat related to kelp, water changes, etc?
- Concern about the use of science:
 - lack of regional marine science that supports reserves.
 - relevance of science from other places.
 - spurious sources of science.
 - monitoring information.
- Appropriateness of use of science from other areas, e.g. New Zealand.
- We may need more time for effective studies.
- Core samples – indicate natural fluctuations in fish populations long before fishing industry
- CDFG data does not reflect real world.
- Research is not adequate.
- More research on all factors.
- Reserves as science experiment.
- Concerns related to science in the Working Group process:
 - Who is providing the science?
 - Where is the science coming from?
 - What is the time frame?
- The science panel is very tough—may ask MRWG for 3 months to answer one question.
- Who decides definition of “sustainable”?
- What data is being collected and how?
- Questions of science/scientific information/use of science.
- Need good data for good science.
- Need more science and better quality science.
- How can we be certain of the validity of the data? (Assumptions? Manipulation of data?)
- How long does it take to determine if a reserve is “working”?
- How can we be assured that the data is accurate? Some scientists are incompetent.

Suggestions:

- Monitoring of reserve after closure to see if it works – good science.
- Use of science in monitoring effectiveness of reserves within the ecosystem to see if it is an appropriate tool. Should be purpose driven.
- Quality of information should be, unbiased, comprehensive and include anecdotal.

Category 3 – Structure, Fairness of the Process to Consider Marine Reserves.

Questions and concerns:

- Someone already decided that the original proposal had merit. This is problematic.
- Working Group must consider perspectives of all user groups equally.
- Where do we draw the line between user groups?
- Reserves are management “flavor of the week”.
- What agencies are involved in the process, and which will benefit (financially).
- Concern about relationship between Sanctuary and National Park Service (jobs and money).
- Structure of government needs change (reactive management vs. proactive management).
- Recognize all user group impacts.
- Not enough fishermen represented on MRWG.
- Squid fishermen are not that concerned about the north side of Santa Rosa .
- Squid fishermen are not that concerned about San Miguel.
- Squid fishermen are concerned about the frontside of Anacapa
 - Involvement in Process
 - Providing data
 - Voicing opinions – What happens with information?
- Fisheries controlled by politics, not science.
- Fate of input?
- Implementation timeline.
- How can we stop this process?
- There is a lack of clarity in the marine reserves process.
- There must be due process in designing reserves.
- In the past individual interests were not well served. There was no group process.
- It is naïve to think that no new marine reserves will be added to California.
- Does the Sanctuary Advisory Council hire scientists?
- The SAC has no qualifications to make these decisions.
- How can we be sure that all user groups are fairly represented?
- SAC members may have conflicts of interest e.g. tourism operators may preferentially select areas for reserves that favor their ongoing business interests.
- Concern about trust in government or the process.
- Concern that reserve advocates have a hidden agenda in favor of fish farming.
- What if the Working Group does not reach consensus? Will the Fish and Game Commission act?
- Who validated the original proposal that brought marine reserves to the table?
- How do we get a chance to review the process?

Suggestions:

- Local guys should have priority.
- The process should be prioritized in terms of impacts on users.
- Everyone has a vested interest and should have equal say.
- Process must be a compromise for everyone.
- Process must consider everyone involved and will be a compromise for all of us.

- Wants input on Sanctuary Advisory Council.
- The MRWG should not use a voting system-- it should be consensus based.
- Tourism should not be included in socioeconomic aspects.
- Desire for fisherman from Ventura County with many years of fishing experience to be on the MRWG.
- Schedule next public forum on Friday night when fishermen typically do not fish to avoid loss of work time.
- Should capture ecotourism benefits.
- More time should be given to the process when people's livelihoods are at stake.

Category 4 – Communication

Questions and concerns:

- Fishermen don't have information to make judgements on not fishing depleted species – don't have data.
- Too much misinformation, or information taken out of context.
- Communication weak/rumors rampant.
- There is information being used in this process that fishermen don't have access to.
- Information is not being used properly or communicated properly.
- How do we make sure that our views as private citizens are being heard?

Suggestions:

- There is a need to clarify important terms such as “sustainability.”
- Educate the public about the process and the impacts.
- Data needs to be accessible.
- Make scientific data available and user-friendly for all groups
- What can the agencies do better?
 - Identify the subcommittees
 - Assimilate more information on the process, including how it got to this point.
- Access to information is key.
- Encourage open communication and respect.
- There needs to be a discussion between all interest groups
- Communication and participation.
- More notification to the public.

Category 5 – Design Issues Related to Reserves

Questions and concerns:

- Can no-take zones create more populations outside these zones?
- How will we make sure we are protecting the proper resources?
- Is the public guaranteed access to the reserves?
- Scientists say “yes” to the question above.
- 70% of open zone is unfishable.
- Wants wilderness areas, and catastrophe protection.
- What species are being focussed on? Which ones need protection?
- Are inshore closures a priority?
- Short-lived species present different regulatory concerns than long-lived – can't get indication of success of 5 years

- Reserves allow nature to take care of itself
- Tried to protect specific species – not effective
- What could happen in reserves – what interests would be affected?
- Mooring or anchoring allowed?
- Healthy kelp forests and fisheries
- Research/education needs
- System manipulated, not natural
- What will be the effect of reserves on recreational users?
- Natural variability
- Size of reserve?
- Rotational reserves would be like rotating crops or maintaining seedstocks.
- Currents can push boats into reserve. How will this be accounted for?
- Reserves have not been designed, if in fact they are designated in the future.
- This is a jurisdictional nightmare.
- Questions of uncertainty and linkages
- When and how will squid research be incorporated into the marine reserve discussion?
- Will the marine reserve discussions include climate change considerations?
- Are we using adequate local knowledge in the final recommendations?
- What species are we protecting?
- Once a reserve is established, is it permanent?
- How do these additional restrictions take into account existing limits?
- Cyclic nature of fishing industry should be considered.
- Once standards have been accepted, what is the process for amending them?
- Will compromise in the process make the result ineffective?

Suggestions:

- Consider endangered species when picking areas for reserves (ex. Pelicans)
- Rotating closures of reserves.
- Need to prioritize goals.
- Need to take a systems approach.
- Use an ecosystem approach – no take zones, if established, would protect all species, both threatened and non-threatened, but would also give equal consideration to economic impact on users – insurance against future events
- Reserve design should be modified in future in response to new information.
- Variable depth for no-take zones
- Open reserves during certain parts of the year for different users (rotation)
- No-take zones should be tested on a short-term basis – 5 years
- No-take should mean all uses, not just commercial fishing – ex. Alaska
 - No one should have the opportunity to catch fish
- Concentrate on species in danger
- All fisheries need to be managed by science – maybe consider rotating reserves to make areas open for fishing some time in the future
- Must have mechanism to change roles/areas as conditions change over time
- Sunset clause
- Interested in limited fisheries access
- The goal should be long term productivity with minimum impact in the short term.
- CINMS should consider effect of problems from the entire southern California bight.

- Suggested: “no- use” (why limit to “no-take”)
- Single species concerns and impacts of reserves on species: halibut, rockfish, squid.
- Use of local knowledge.
- One option is seasonal/rotational no-take zones.
- Clearly define area—not by %-- possibly by depth and/or landmarks.
- The proposal should be simple to avoid confusion.
- Pelagic species should remain available.

Category 6 – Issue Definition and Solution

Questions and concerns:

- How will losing fishing grounds result in sustainability?
- What other alternatives are there for solving the problems?
- Why does the flow chart for the process show “marine reserves” why not “solutions”
- The process is going in one direction. What is the question?
- Are there any other proposals instead of no-take zones?
- How do we determine how many squid can be taken and still be sustainable?
- Are we looking for reasons to make reserves happen instead of looking at protection first?
- Concern that fish are going extinct
- Enforcement?
- Someone in this group attended yearly restoration meetings and addressed ecosystem, rather than species-specific approach. They are successful.
- Enforcement problems.
- What is the goal? Are marine reserves the answer?
- If we can’t identify the problem, how do you know reserves are the answer?
- Are overall impacts being addressed instead of just fishing?
- Concerned with keeping an ecological balance.
- Maybe we don’t know enough about the ocean to make decisions about closure – ex. Front side of Catalina Island is closed, but there is no change in fish.
- Marine reserves are necessary – data exists for some species in decline – important to have reserves for reproduction.
- What about pollution – is anyone looking at islands/channel?
- Other fisheries, (ex. salmon) closed and don’t seem to recover.
- Seen changes at islands.
- Reserves are insurance—avoid a collapse.
- Twenty years diving – concern of loss of species.
- Twenty years diving/fishing - seen changes decrease in abundance.
- Decline in fisheries.
- Target species regulations is adequate.
- Reserves may help recovery.
- Status of resources.
- Why do we need marine reserves?
 - What are they an answer to?
 - What are the problems?
 - What can we do to solve the problems?
- What is the goal of marine reserves?
- Will marine reserves solve the problem?

- If there is no real problem, will one be found?
- Over the course of many years, have changes in fish populations been seen?
- If MRWG decides marine reserves are inappropriate, what happens?
- There are residual effects from the sewage outfall.
- What other ways can we address the issues?
- Given the cyclical nature of marine ecosystems, is this a short-term solution?
- The reserve tool may not be appropriate as a long term solution.
- Where did the proposal for marine reserves come from?
- Questions regarding effectiveness of reserves.
- Recognition of decline of some species.
- What is the problem?
- The problems is not well-defined—how can data be collected when the question is not known?
- How can the Working Group come up with solutions and recommendations when the problems has not been defined by the Science Panel?

Suggestions:

- We need a better quota system.
- No-take zones should be species-specific.
- Purpose of Marine Reserve
 - To protect species of concern
 - To preserve livelihood by preventing irreparable damage.
- Fluctuations – rely on regulators to make laws to stop them from fishing when stocks are low.
- There should be no preservation or reserves, as fish are increasing.
- Anacapa Landing Cove Reserve seems to work – let's try 20% of Sanctuary for reserves.
- Tank enforcement preferred.
- Alaska management could be a model for species management.
- Aggressive species management as first option, reserves as last option.
- Build the common premise for need for reserves in next 5 year plan.
- Don't punish healthy, well-managed fisheries (e.g. squid, halibut, lobster, urchin) for rockfish and abalone problems.

Category 7 – Miscellaneous

Questions and concerns:

- Rockfish – numerous user groups.
- Oil companies – blasting to install platforms – took responsibility.
- Squid fisheries are: clean, regulated, labor intensive, have a 2% by-catch, have no bottom impacts
 - Lights issue – has seen no documentation of impacts – just asked to turn lights off
 - Can squid fishermen be part of the study?
- Not totally against, but have concerns.
- Successful reserves – Philippines, Florida.
- Twenty-five years of fish experience in Alaska - reserves affect squid fishery.
- Lobster/LL fisher – ecosystem balance
- Water quality.

- If no-take zones are created what are the chances of studying no-take zones already in existence?
- Will the state pay \$3 million for a sea urchin fishery buy-back program?
- Declines for some species are not due to temporal changes.
- Not fishing squid could be detrimental to the system.
- Fishers are self-regulating to avoid hurting selves economically.
- Log book information is being collected by DFG. Determining catch per 1 mile X 1 mile block is very difficult.
- The market economy is a conservation technique.
- Anacapa reserve has been very successful.
- How much money from the annual catch do fishers put back into research or “seeding” the fishery?
- Is the reserve process part of a larger vision for the Sanctuary?

Suggestions:

- Let sea otter return to balance system.